

**Queens College Psychology: General Master's in Psychology (GMA)  
Comprehensive Exam FAQ**

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Completing the comprehensive exams is one of the two GMA capstone experiences for your degree. This FAQ will answer frequent questions students have regarding the comprehensive exams in the GMA program.

**1. What are the comprehensive exams?**

The comprehensive exams are cumulative departmental exams that assess a student's knowledge in the three core courses of the GMA program: History of Psychology (PSYCH 700), Advanced Experimental Psychology (PSYCH 701), and Statistical Methods in Psychology (PSYCH 705). Students will need to pass all three exams in order to obtain their master's degree.

**2. When can I take the comprehensive exams?**

The comprehensive exams are given twice in an academic year: Once in the Fall Semester in December and once in the Spring Semester in May. These are the only times students can take these exams. Students who wish to retake their exams also must retake them during these times. There are no exceptions to this. Please plan accordingly and do not wait until your last semester to take these exams.

Students are generally required to complete the course before taking the exam for that course. For example, **you must complete or are in processing of completing** History of Psychology to take the History of Psychology comprehensive exam.

**3. I won't finish my course before the comprehensive exams are scheduled, can I still take the exam for that course?**

Yes, you will still be able to take the exam for the course if you are enrolled and are planning to finish the course that semester. Comprehensive exams are given before finals week, so students will be almost complete with their courses before the exams. You will have enough information from your courses to take the respective exams. You cannot take the exam if you have not taken the course.

**4. When are comprehensive exams scheduled during the semester?**

Comprehensive exams are scheduled one week before finals week.

**5. How many questions are there on the comprehensive exams?**

All three exams are multiple choice and questions range from 75 to 85 questions per exam.

**6. How long do I have to complete the exams?**

Students are allotted six hours during exam day to complete their exams. They can take the full six to complete one exam, two, or three. This is up to the individual student during exam day. All exams should be completed within the six hour time frame.

**7. What are the general procedures on exam day?**

Students will arrive before 9:30 am during exam day. Exams will promptly begin at 9:30 am. There are three separate exams: history, statistics, and advanced experimental. Students are allowed to take one, two, or all three exams if they have completed or will complete the course for that exam during that semester.

Students are not permitted to leave the room once the exams begin, however, if you are taking more than one exam you are allowed to leave the room between exams. Students will need to sign their names on an attendance sheet for each exam they take and place their phone with their ID in a plastic bag during the exam. They can use their phones during their break if they are taking multiple exams.

**8. Are there breaks during the comprehensive exams?**

Yes, if you are taking more than one exam, there is a break period between those exams if you so choose. You can decide to continue the exams without a break, which is also permitted. Please be mindful of the time as you have six hours to complete all of your scheduled exams.

**9. I want to do an empirical thesis; do I need to take the comprehensive exams?**

No, if you are completing the empirical thesis, you do not need to take the comprehensive exams. Please refer to our thesis guide for more information.

**10. I want to do the literature review thesis; do I need to take the comprehensive exams?**

Yes, if you are completing the literature review thesis you will need to take the comprehensive exams. Please refer to our thesis guide for more information.

**11. How do I sign-up for the comprehensive exams?**

The department will send out an email in the beginning of the semester to students in the GMA program to register for the comprehensive exams. Once signed up, the department will send a follow-up email near the time of the exams with additional information about testing times, locations, and procedures.

**12. I signed up for the exams, but I feel like I am not prepared enough to take it, can I cancel my sign-up?**

There are no penalties for students who do not show up for the exams. Students will only be barred from taking the exams if they do not register for their exams prior to test day. If they miss or do not show up during test day and they have signed up, they will not be penalized.

Please email the department director or advisor if you will not to make it to the exam, such that they are aware you will not be available for the exam. You can register again to take the exam the following semester.

**13. How many exams can I take on exam day?**

You can take one, two, or three exams on exam day. You do not need to take the exams in any particular order during exam day. The only requirement is that you have completed the course prior to the exam, or will be completing the course during the semester that you take the exam.

**14. Do I need to take all comprehensive exams to get my degree?**

Yes, you will need to complete and pass all three exams if you are not doing an empirical thesis for your degree. You will not get your degree without having passed all three exams.

**15. Will there be reviews for the exam?**

The department provides review guides and review sessions before the exams. Review guides are emailed once the student has signed up for the exam. Review sessions are held the week of exams. The reviews are not meant to teach the entire course again, rather, students should come equipped with specific questions on the topics of review.

**16. How can I study for these exams?**

The review guides provide a comprehensive overview of the material covered in your core courses. In addition to your notes and the review sessions from the department, students should have enough materials to prepare for the exams.

**17. How long should I study for the exams?**

This depends on the individual student. If you are taking the course and plan to take the comprehensive exam for that course that semester, you will have enough current knowledge to take the exam.

If you decide to take it after you have completed the course, you can do the following:

- Study at a manageable pace with your course notes and follow a study timeline.
- Formulate your own review materials from the review guides provided by the department.
- Attend review sessions provided by the department before the exams.
- Form study groups with your peers to review exam materials.
- There is no one right way to study, find methods that work best for you and your learning!

**18. Where can I get the review guides for the comprehensive exams?**

The department will email you review guides once you have signed up for the comprehensive exams. The review guides are comprehensive overviews of the materials covered in your core courses. You can use these guides to study and prepare for your exams.

**19. Do I need to be in a lab to take the comprehensive exams?**

No, you do not need to be in a lab to take the comprehensive exams. The comprehensive exams are departmental exams for the GMA degree. You will need to be in a lab if you plan on completing a thesis. We do however encourage students to join a lab for research experience if they so choose.

**20. What happens if I fail the comprehensive exams?**

You can retake the exams the following semester. You do not have to retake the exams you have passed.

**21. How many times can I retake the exams?**

Students are allowed to retake the exams until they pass the exams. Students must pass all three comprehensive exams for their degree. They will not be awarded the degree if they do not pass their comprehensive exams. Please plan accordingly, and do not wait until your last semester to take the exams.

Please keep in mind, if you do not finish the comprehensive exams within the 36-credit limit of the program, you will need to re-matriculate into a new semester to take or retake the exams.

**22. How can I re-matriculate, are there any additional fees?**

You will need to discuss this with the program director or program advisor about re-matriculating. Students must complete the re-matriculation form and pay a \$225 fee in order to re-matriculate.

**Forms should be scanned and emailed to the QC Hub and the fee will be paid on CUNYFirst once the form is processed. You do not have to mail or go in person to pay the fee.** You are only responsible for the fee in order to re-matriculate; you will not be charged anything else beyond this.

There is no deadline to do this, however, please do this as soon as possible as there are deadlines to apply for graduation.

Maintenance of Matriculation Form and additional information can be found below on the Queens College Registrars page on Graduation policies [here](#).

**23. What happens after I re-matriculate?**

After re-matriculating, you will be a registered student for the semester in which you matriculated into. You do not need to take additional courses as you have finished your coursework; you will only need to pass the comprehensive exams.

You will also now be able to apply for graduation for that semester on CUNYFirst. Please apply for graduation before the graduation deadline. You can find the graduation deadline when you check your graduation status on CUNYFirst.

**24. What happens after I submit my comprehensive exams?**

The exams will be graded by the GMA program director and advisor and you will be notified if you have passed or failed the exams. No grades are given for the exam, only which exams you passed or failed.

**25. What happens after I pass the comprehensive exams?**

Congratulations! You will receive a letter from the GMA program director certifying that you have completed the comprehensive exam requirement needed for graduation. This will be sent to the Office of Graduate Studies to ensure you will be able to graduate.